



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT OFFICE
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, Oregon 97504
email address: or110mb@or.blm.gov

Sept 8 1999

(IN REPLY REFER TO: _____)

Dear Friend:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is beginning preparation of a Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Cascade Siskiyou Ecological Emphasis Area (CSEEA) located on BLM managed public lands in Jackson County, Oregon and Siskiyou County, California. The plan, scheduled for completion in the fall of 2000, will provide overall direction for management of the public lands.

The CSEEA was established in the 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan and the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan primarily due to its unique and diverse ecological and biological characteristics. Because of the area's close proximity to the growing cities of Ashland and Medford, it is also used by an increasing number of recreationists for hiking, horseback riding, off-highway vehicle use, and other activities.

Some of the preliminary planning issues identified to date include off-highway vehicle use, livestock grazing, noxious weeds, timber harvest, special designations, and the CSEEA boundary. These issues, and others, have been placed in one of six categories: commercial interests, healthy and diverse ecosystems, ownership transfers and land allocation boundaries, recreation, public safety, and roads and trails.

We are requesting feedback concerning the above mentioned preliminary planning issues. Of particular interest is the identification of new issues and comments on the preliminary issues. **Written comments will be accepted through October 29, 1999.** Comments should be sent to Richard J. Drehoel, Ashland Field Manager, BLM Medford District Office, 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, OR 97504

In addition, three field tours and one afternoon meeting have been scheduled to help identify significant issues.

Field tours are scheduled for Tuesday, September 28, 1999; Saturday, October 2, 1999; and Wednesday, October 6, 1999 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Field tours in vans provided by the BLM will leave from the U.S. Forest Service parking area, Ashland Ranger District, 645 Washington Street, Ashland, Oregon.

The afternoon meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 9, 1999 at 1:30 p.m. at the Science Building Auditorium (Sc118), Southern Oregon University, 1250 Siskiyou Boulevard, Ashland, Oregon.

To ensure there is enough room for all participants, please contact Bill Yocum, Environmental Planner, at (541) 770-2384 or Tom Sensenig, Ecologist, at (541) 770-2319 at least one week prior to any of the field trips or the public meeting listed above. Bill and Tom, along with Francis Berg, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist, BLM Redding Field Office, (530) 224-2100, are also available to answer any questions regarding the planning process.

Written information and maps will be available at the BLM Medford District Office at 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, OR 97504 and at the BLM Redding Field Office, 355 Hemsted Drive, Redding, CA 96002. Additional information on the CSEEA region is located on the BLM Medford District Office's web site at <http://www.or.blm.gov/Medford/>.

Thank you for your interest in public land management.

Sincerely,

Ron Wenker
District Manager



PUBLIC SCOPING INFORMATION
CASCADE/SISKIYOU ECOLOGICAL
EMPHASIS AREA MANAGEMENT
PLAN / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT for the Ashland Resource Area

United States Department
of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Medford District Office
3040 Biddle Road,
Medford, Oregon 97504



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Bureau of Land Management
Medford District Office
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Medford, Oregon 97504

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Why should the Ashland Resource Area prepare a Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Cascade/Siskiyou Ecological Emphasis Area (CSEEA)?

In the Medford District's 1995 Resource Management Plan (RMP) we identified CSEEA as a Special Area Land Use Allocation. The RMP indicated that a site-specific management plan for CSEEA was needed. In development of the management plan the RMP required coordination with the Redding BLM Field Office.

Local and regional groups differ over future management within the CSEEA. Opinions range from full protection as a wilderness area to managing the area for recreation including Off-Highway Vehicle, grazing, timber harvest, and other commodity uses. The completed management plan will provide direction for management of the public lands.

Based on the uniqueness of the area, confluence of several ecoregions, relatively undegraded condition, interest by diverse groups, it was decided to do an Environmental Impact Statement.

This area has high ecological values. Boxes on the map on the other side of this mailer provide more information about the areas. The special areas are:

1. Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCNST)
2. Pilot Rock Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
3. Portions of the Jenny Creek ACEC within the CSEEA boundaries
4. Oregon Gulch Research Natural Area (RNA)
5. Scotch Creek RNA
6. Box-O Ranch
7. Portions of the Jenny Creek Late Successional Reserve
8. Soda Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA)

Ecological values do not stop at the Oregon/California state line (e.g., the recognized interstate deer herd). From discussions with the Redding BLM Field Office, it was agreed to include the following special areas within the CSEEA planning:

9. Horseshoe Ranch Wildlife Area (Redding Resource Area RMP)
10. Jenny Creek Falls ACEC/RNA (Redding Resource Area RMP)

Following review of the boundaries, additional, adjacent area(s) would be considered for inclusion:

11. Parsnip Lakes

CSEEA is located on federal lands in southern Jackson County, Oregon and northern Siskiyou County, California on lands administered by BLM Ashland Resource Area and Redding Field Office.



CSEEA extends from Cottonwood Creek west of Interstate 5 and the Western Pacific Railroad along the Oregon/California Border to Jenny Creek and Agate Flat. The northern border follows the upper reaches of Bear Creek in the Rogue River Basin below the ridge line past Pilot Rock to Keene Creek Ridge and Jenny Creek. A two mile wide wildlife connectivity corridor extends north along Hobart Ridge to Oregon Route 66 (Greensprings Highway).

The area primarily lies in that part of the Klamath Mountain Ecoregion that includes the eastern portions of the Klamath River Ridge and a small area in the Siskiyou Foothills to the north. Agate Flat and portions of Jenny Creek are in the Southern Cascade Slopes of the Eastern Cascade Slopes and Foothills Ecoregion.

Northeastern dipping Western Cascade Geological Province Oligocene basalt, endosite, and volcanic and volcanoclastic rocks underlie the area. Many of the soils derived from these parent materials contain shrink-swell clays that make slick surfaces when wet and deep cracks when dry.

Elevations vary from 3400 feet at Cottonwood and Jenny Creeks to 5908 feet at Pilot Rock and 6089 feet at Soda Mountain. The area is characterized by steep rocky slopes. The main east-west range extends from Siskiyou Pass to Jenny Creek. Several permanent streams dissect the south facing slopes above the Klamath River.

CSEEA's Mediterranean climate consists of long, hot dry summers and relatively mild winters with most precipitation in the late fall, winter, and early spring. The continental climate of the Great Basin and the more moderate wetter oceanic climate to the west influence the area. Summer thunder storms are more frequent than in the near-by Rogue Valley due to moisture laden air drawn up from the southwest along the east side of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains. Precipitation varies from 22.6 inches at Agate Flat to over 40 inches at Soda Mountain. Snow pack is present from December to February above 4,000 feet.

Plant communities present a rich mosaic of grass and shrublands, wet meadows, Garry oak and California black oak woodlands, juniper scrublands, mixed conifer and white fir communities. Stream bottoms support broad-leaved deciduous trees and shrubs. Special plant communities include rosaceous chaparral, oak-juniper woodlands, and patterned ground.

Some Preliminary Issues Based on Past Public and Agency Input

The Cascade/Siskiyou Ecological Emphasis Area has been a source of conflicting interests since the 1980s with the establishment of the Soda Mountain Wilderness Study Area and Special Areas (ACEC/RNA/CSEEA). Preliminary issues are presented here as a basis for further discussion during the scoping process.

A. COMMERCIAL INTERESTS:

1. **Timber.** The Medford RMP deferred timber harvest in the CSEEA until 2005 pending completion of the Management Plan. About 74 million board feet of commercial timber is present in the CSEEA on lands classified as Matrix (federal land outside of reserves and special areas which will be available for timber harvest).

Issue: Should the commercial timber harvest be available within the CSEEA?

2. **Livestock grazing.** Presently, 1,906 active Animal Unit Months (AUM - the amount of forage necessary for the sustenance of one cow or its equivalent for one month) are leased to four livestock operations on two allotments totaling 36,774 acres of public and private land. Two small allotments in the study area are currently vacant. Many riparian areas in the CSEEA have improved because of intensive management by the BLM, the permittees, and more than a decade of annual riparian volunteer projects. Also, since the CSEEA and surrounding areas are open range, sporadic conflicts occur between livestock and rural interface homeowners.

Issues: Are there areas where livestock management should be altered?

3. **Soda Mountain.** The current location of an active Oregon State Department of Forestry Fire Lookout, eight active BLM leased communication sites of passive relay reflectors, transmitters, and translators for variety of private and public entities. Some sixty antennas rise into the sky along the summit, mostly out of the lookout's field of view. Year-round access to the summit is via a poorly maintained jeep road off of the Soda Mountain Road. The fiber optic communication site east of Soda Mountain below the power line is located on private land.

Issues: Should Soda Mountain summit road be maintained or upgraded to prevent erosion? Should additional structures be added to the summit?

4. **Power lines.** Two power lines bisect the CSEEA across Agate Flat, up Skookum Creek and over the east flank of Soda Mountain transmitting power from OQPCO and Irongate Dams to the Rogue Valley. PacificCorp maintains roads for their access. Problems occur with public use by road degradation and vandalism (shooting porcelain isolators).

Issues: What should be done about power line vandalism and road degradation? Should the road be closed to the public?

B. HEALTHY AND DIVERSE ECOSYSTEMS

The CSEEA is noted for its biological and ecological diversity, because of its location at the confluence of the Klamath, Cascades, and Eastern Cascade Slopes and Foothills Ecoregions. Each ecoregion brings its own assemblage of plants and animals together in the variety of habitats provided by the areas geologic, climatic, and topographic diversity. CSEEA is



older established trees and present a major fire hazard.

Issues: Should actions (prescribe fire, road de-building, limited grazing) be implemented to restore ecosystem function?

3. **Noxious weeds.** Native vegetation is at risk from alien plant invasion. Weeds are transported by humans, their pets, vehicles, livestock, and by native animals.
4. **Tree pathogens.** Black stain is a problem in many forested communities weakened by dense understory competition caused by the absence of regular, light ground fires. The fungal disease spreads along roadways.

Issues: Should measures (road closures) be taken to prevent the spread of noxious weeds and tree pathogens in the CSEEA?

5. **Wildlife Habitat.** CSEEA provides valuable wildlife habitat such as nesting areas, foraging, and roosting sites; riparian areas; wet and dry meadows; and sensitive deer winter range. Increasing numbers of elk appear to be using the Box-O Ranch.

Issues: Should wildlife habitat be protected, maintained, or improved through management?

C. OWNERSHIP TRANSFER AND LAND ALLOCATION BOUNDARIES

Since the establishment of the Medford District RMP and the Redding RMP, new information and requests from other agencies, groups and individuals raise the possibility of land exchanges, acquisitions, special designations, and changing the RMPs land allocation boundaries.

Issues: Should lands be identified for exchange or acquisition through the CSEEA planning process. Should changes be made to the land use allocation (e.g., Horseshoe Ranch, Matrix, LSR, ACECs) boundaries?

Issues: Should special designations be pursued (such as: modifications to existing ACEC's, additional ACEC's, or other special designations)?

D. RECREATION

Currently, CSEEA recreation is both passive and active. Passive recreation includes like hiking, nature study, and cross country skiing. Active recreation includes motorized activities such as OHV, 4x4, motorcycles, and snowmobiles. Frequently these activities conflict (e.g., motorcycles vs. nature study).

1. **Hiking/Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail(PCNST).** Most CSEEA hiking is done along the PCNST by day hikers from the Rogue Valley and backpackers walking the trail. Activities along the PCNST are guided by the Medford District PCNST Special Recreation Management Area Recreation Area Management Plan. Mountain bikes and motorized vehicles are not allowed on the PCNST.

2. **Camping.** The majority of camping in the CSEEA is by backpackers and hunters. There are no established camp grounds in the CSEEA. However, the PCNST Management Plan recommends rebuilding the historic Bean Cabin and adding equestrian facilities.

3. **Rock climbing.** Pilot Rock and The Pinnacle, a small rock spire to the south, are used by rock climbers (see Public Safety section).

4. **Motorized vehicles, OHV (Off Highway Vehicle), 4x4, motorcycles, snowmobiles.** Individuals and groups use the minor roads, and OHV trails for recreation. Occasionally vehicles illegally leave established roads for cross-country travel.

5. **Hunting/fishing.** CSEEA is used by hunters. Temporary hunting camps are common, some of which have yearly, traditional use. Fishing occurs in Jenny creek for rainbow (redband) trout.

6. **Nature study.** The area is used by local groups and individuals attracted by scenic views, wildflower displays and diverse animal populations.

7. **Wilderness.** BLM established the Soda Mountain Wilderness Study Area (5,867 acres). Some groups want the size of the wilderness area increased to 37,500 acres. There are no formal trails through the area. Majority of the use is by cross-country hikers and equestrian wilderness advocates who travel down-hill from higher elevations.

8. **Equestrian.** Horse-use in CSEEA occurs along established roads, trails, and cross-country. Cross-country travel on steep terrain can be damaging, disrupting soil surface and vegetation. The introduction of weed fruits and seeds is a potential problem.

9. **Mountain bikes.** Mountain biking in the CSEEA is not common. Steep, difficult terrain make cross-country mountain biking unlikely.

Issues: Should CSEEA be closed to OHV use? Should a portion of CSEEA be opened to OHV use? Should there be designated trails in CSEEA? What recreational activities are appropriate in an ecological emphasis area?

E. PUBLIC SAFETY

Public safety is a concern for everyone using and enjoying public lands. People want to visit areas that are safe and clean. Existing laws are in place to respond to the many violations occurring on public lands. However, limited law enforcement personnel and a large public land base make enforcement difficult, especially in the CSEEA with its limited and difficult access. The following are examples of CSEEA safety issues

1. **Climbing on Pilot Rock.** Pilot Rock is in many ways is an attractive nuisance. The view is grand but the route to the top has many hazards and is dangerous. In the past people have been fatally injured, and airplanes have crashed into and within the vicinity Pilot Rock.
2. **Fire hazard / risk.** Lack of periodic low intensity fires over the landscape and aggressive fire suppression have resulted an increasing probability of catastrophic wildfire that presents a hazard to private inholdings and the environment.
3. **Vandalism to private and public resources.** Power line insulators, private buildings, fences, signs, wildlife harassment, destruction of gates, and livestock facilities have been and are targets for vandalism.
4. **Illegal dumping of trash and toxic wastes.** Currently, trash and toxic waste dumping are not a major problem. However, with increasing population and more people moving into the country illegal dumping is expected to increase.

Issues: What management strategies should the BLM implement to increase visitor safety, reduce user conflict, and reduce or eliminate vandalism on public lands?

F. ROADS AND TRAILS

Roads and trail use is a source of public controversy. Off highway vehicle (OHV) use is currently limited to existing roads subject to some seasonal limitations to protect natural resources and prevent road damage. Motorcycle and OHV clubs want roads to remain open while environmental groups want the roads closed to OHV use. Projected population increases could impact OHV use.

1. **CSEEA integrity/large unroaded area.** Selected road de-building could result in larger unfragmented blocks of public land where natural processes could proceed with minimum human interference.
2. **Sedimentation and erosion.** Roads contribute to erosion and stream sedimentation.
3. **Access (private inholdings, timber, grazing, management, recreation).** Roads must be provided to allow access to private rights, inholdings, and management.
4. **Wildlife impacts.** Through human population increases, wildlife harassment/disturbance is expected to increase (e.g., deer and bear).
5. **Weeds / tree pathogens.** Roads are transportation corridors for the spread of weeds and black stain.
6. **Vandalism.** Road access correlates with the destruction of public and private property.

Issues: What roads are needed for the protection/management of activities in the CSEEA?



How can you help?

Consider each of the preliminary issues presented in this document. Have we identified the correct CSEEA issues? If you feel we have overlooked important issues, or are not looking at a particular resource situation properly, please let us know.

Here are two ways you can become an active participant in the process: 1) attend a field trip and/or the afternoon meeting (schedule is contained within the letter of introduction, send in your comments and trip reservation card by **September 24, 1999**), 2) send your written comments to our Medford office by regular mail or by E-Mail by **October 29, 1999**.

CSEEA
Bureau of Land Management
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, Oregon 97504

Web site Http://www.or.blm.gov/Medford
E-Mail or110mb@or.blm.gov
(be sure to mention CSEEA)

Tentative Project Schedule

1. Development of planning criteria; including information to be used, issues to be addressed, and alternatives to be considered -Fall 1999
2. File Draft Environmental Impact Statement- March 2000 (90 day public review period)
3. File Final Environmental Impact Statement -July 2000 (30 day public review period)
4. Record of Decision -October 2000

COMMENT RESPONSE CARD (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Bureau of Land Management, CSEEA
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, OR 97504

- ☐ YES, I would like a copy of the CSEEA Plan/EIS at each stage of the planning process.
☐ Please send me only the FINAL COPY of the CSEEA Plan/EIS.
☐ Yes, I am planning on attending the field trip on Sep.28, Oct. 2, Oct. 6 (please circle one).
☐ Yes, I am planning on attending the afternoon meeting on Oct. 9 at Southern Oregon University.
☐ Yes, I would like my name and address withheld from public review or disclosure under Freedom of Information Act request.

Name _____ Address _____ City, State Zip _____
Please take a few minutes to provide your input concerning the preliminary issues contained in this notice or list any new issues. We are interested in your ideas and we look forward to hearing from you.

If you wish to remain on the mailing list, please complete and return this response card. We are trying to save paper and conserve resources. If we do not hear from you, your name will be removed from the mailing list.

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